

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 /110 R

DRAFTED BY EA/LC:LMRIVES:DTM

APPROVED BY EA:AWHUMMEL

EA/TB:JBDEXTER

L/EA:EVERVILLE

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DOD/ISA - ADM. BIGLEY

DOD/GC:BFORMAN

JCS - COL DIDDLE

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R 081520Z AUG 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

COMUSSAG

COMUSMACTHAI

S E C R E T STATE 172843

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, EAID, ETRN, CB, TH

SUBJECT: CONTRACT AIRLIFT SUPPORT FOR CAMBODIA

1. DEPARTMENT AND DOD MOST DISTRESSED BY NEGATIVE ATTITUDE ON THIS SUBJECT AS EXPRESSED TO AMBASSADOR BY MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. PLANS FOR CONTRACT AIRLIFT WELL UNDERWAY AND ANY CANCELLATION WILL AFFECT NOT ONLY MILITARY PLANNING AS CONCERNS THAILAND BUT ALSO INDICATIONS GIVEN TO CONGRESS REGARDING FUTURE ELIMINATION OF USAF ROLE IN CAMBODIA.

2. WE THEREFORE BELIEVE THAT ISSUE SHOULD BE DISCUSSED AGAIN WITH APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES AT HIGH LEVEL. IN THESE

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CONVERSATIONS, IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT THAT REASON FOR

SHIFT FROM USAF TO CONTRACT AIRLIFT DESIGNED NOT ONLY TO MAINTAIN USG SUPPORT FOR CAMBODIA, BUT AS PART OF OUR CONTINUING EFFORTS TO RESPOND TO RTG DESIRES FOR REDUCED MILITARY PRESENCE IN THAILAND. WE FRANKLY HAD NOT ANTICIPATED ARGUMENT OF A "NEW AIR AMERICA" WHICH WE WOULD THINK COULD BE REFUTED BY RTG ON TWO GROUNDS AT LEAST: A) THAT BIRD (THAI ROCK) IS A COMPANY ALREADY ESTABLISHED IN THAILAND AND IN NO WAY CONTROLLED OR RUN BY USG; AND B) THAT WHILE REDUCTIONS RESULTING FROM THE SUBSTITUTION OF CIVILIAN MEANS FOR US MILITARY AIRLIFT ARE EXPECTED TO BE MODEST, APPROVAL OF THIS APPROACH BY THE THAI WILL BE A FURTHERANCE OF THE CONTINUING THAI-US EFFORT TO REDUCE US MILITARY PRESENCE IN THAILAND.

3. WE ASSUME RTG DOES NOT WANT PHNOM PENH GOVERNMENT TO FALL DESPITE THAI RELUCTANCE TO BECOME TOO CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH IT. THEREFORE, IN YOUR DISCUSSION WITH RTG YOU SHOULD STRESS DIRECT CONNECTION BETWEEN AIRLIFT AND GKR'S PROSPECTS FOR SURVIVAL. IF THAI ARE NOT WILLING TO CONSIDER SHIFT TO CONTRACT AIRLIFT BY PRIVATE FIRM, YOU SHOULD PRESS THEM FOR AN ALTERNATIVE.

4. EMBASSY MAY ALSO WANT TO CONSIDER MAKING PARALLEL APPROACH TO THAI GOVERNMENT THROUGH MILITARY TO MILITARY CONTACTS IN DISCUSSIONS. MAC THAI HAS ENJOYED GOOD TRACK RECORD ON SIMILAR PROBLEMS. KISSINGER

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NNN

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